

The **Sun Essence Sutra (Surya-garbha-sutra)** also teaches that we should not use any of the objects offered to the Sangha.

Regarding, the virtue of generosity, on the other hand, there is immense positive potential gained from making offerings to the Sangha and thereby supporting their practice.

Other powerful recipients of positive or negative actions are Bodhisattvas. **The Seal of Engaging in Developing the Power of Faith Sutra (Sraddha-baladhanavata-mutra-sutra)** says that it is far worse if we get angry with a Bodhisattva, than if we put all sentient beings in a gloomy prison, steal all their possessions, or destroy as many stupas as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River.

Regarding virtuous actions, the **Seal of Engaging in Certain and Uncertain Destinies Sutra (Niyatani-yata-gati-mudravatara-sutra)** says that we accumulate far greater merit if we have faith in and praise a Bodhisattva than if we lovingly restore the eye-sight of all sentient beings after they lost their eyes.

The reason for this is that Bodhisattvas have dedicated their entire life to working for the liberation and enlightenment of all sentient beings. Therefore, any action that either benefits or harms a Bodhisattva either facilitates or interferes with their effort to lead sentient beings to liberation and enlightenment.

2. Powerful in terms of the support

Tibetan: དེན་གྱི་སྒོ་ནས་སྟོབས་ཆེ་བ། - *Den gyi go nae tob che-wa* (*Den* = support/basis/base)

Support refers to the person who performs the action. The consequences of a negative action are far worse for a person who is incompetent with regard to the working of karma because they may not be aware of the negativity of their action, do not experience any regret, are unable to generate antidotes in order to purify the karma, and do not know how to prevent such action in the future. A person who is competent with respect to the law of karma, on the other hand, is far more able to distinguish between virtuous and non-virtuous actions, generate regret, purify the karma, and protect themselves from such actions occurring again in the future. They are also more likely to enhance their positive actions and defend themselves against delusions that have the potential to destroy the virtuous karmic imprints they have accumulated. Therefore, a *negative* action is more powerful if a person does *not* live in accordance with the working of karma and a *positive* action is more powerful if a person *does* live in accordance with the working of karma.

Furthermore, a positive action becomes weightier if the support (the person performing the action) holds vows – ideally the three sets of vows, i.e. the Pratimoksha, Bodhisattva, and Tantric vows. If one finds it difficult to make a lifelong commitment one could also take the one day vows (possibly combined with the Mahayana motivation) and thus make any positive action more powerful. However, negative actions also become stronger if one takes vows but does not keep them purely to the best of one's ability.

1. Powerful in terms of the substance

Tibetan: རྟོག་པའི་སྒོ་ནས་སྟོབས་ཆེ་བ། - *Ngoe-po'i go nae tob che-wa* (*Ngoe-po* = substance/thing/

functioning thing)

Here the substance refers to the object or the material that is used in a positive or negative action. With respect to the act of giving, the substance is explained to be threefold: (1) giving of material goods, (2) giving of the Dharma, and (3) giving of protection. The third type of giving can be subdivided into (a) giving protection from worldly threats and dangers and (b) giving protection from the obstructions to liberation and enlightenment. The latter substance (protection from the obstruction to liberation and enlightenment) as well as the substance of the second type of giving (the Dharma, which also includes one's own Dharma practice) are the substances which, when given, make the act of generosity more powerful.

2. Powerful in terms of the motivation

Tibetan: བསམ་པའི་སྒོ་ནས་སྟོབས་ཆེ་བ། - *Sam pa'i go nae tob che-wa* (*Sam-pa* = motivation/attitude/thought)

The motivation that makes a positive action most powerful is the motivation of Bodhicitta, thinking: "May this action enable me to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings." A lesser motivation is the attitude that wants to attain self-liberation, and an even lesser motivation is the wish to obtain a higher rebirth and happiness in future lives. However, if one performs an action motivated by the wish to attain happiness merely in this life, the action is likely to be negative.

Lama Tsongkhapa says in *his Lam Rim Chenmo (Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment)*:

If your concern is mainly for the pleasures of this lifetime, prior to death, then you accumulate non-meritorious actions.

A Presentation of karmic results

There are three results of karma:

- 1) Fruitional results
- 2) Causally concordant results
- 3) Environmental results

1) Fruitional results

Tibetan: ནམ་མྱེན་གྱི་འབྲས་བུ། - *Nam-min gyi dre-bu* (*Nam-min* = fruition/maturation, *gyi* = genitive,

dre-bu = result/effect)

Fruitional results refer to the type of rebirth or the type of life one takes as a result of the virtuous or non-virtuous actions one has accumulated. Non-virtuous actions, such as the ten non-virtues, are based on the three poisons (anger, attachment, and ignorance) and occur in three strengths: great, medium, and small.

Accumulating the great form of any of the ten non-virtues or other non-virtues results in rebirth in the hell-realm; accumulating the medium form of any of the ten non-virtues or other non-virtues results in rebirth in the hungry ghost realm; and accumulating the small form of any of the ten non-virtues or other non-virtues results in rebirth in the human realm.

Furthermore, there are three levels of fruitional results for each of the ten virtues or any other virtue, depending on whether it was a great, medium or small virtuous action. The result of great virtue is rebirth as a celestial realm in the form or formless realm, the result of a medium virtue is rebirth as a celestial being in the desire realm, and the result of small virtue is rebirth as a human. Please note that human rebirth here refers to an ordinary human rebirth and not a precious human rebirth with all the leisure and endowments conducive for spiritual development.

2) Causally concordant results

Tibetan: ལྷན་མཐུན་པའི་འབྲས་བུ། - *Gyu thuen-pa'i dre-bu* (*Gyu* = cause, *thuen-pa* = concordant/conforming,

dre-bu = result/effect)

There are two types of causally concordant results (i.e. results that are similar to the cause):

- (I) Causally concordant behavioral results
- (II) Causally concordant experiential results

(I) Causally concordant behavioral results

Tibetan: རྟེན་པ་ལྷན་མཐུན་གྱི་འབྲས་བུ། - *che-pa gyu thuen gyi dre-bu* (*che-pa* = to do/to act/to perform)

The causally concordant behavioral result refers to the kind of behavior one adopts as a result of one's previous action, i.e. one behaves in a way one was accustomed to in the past.

For example, as a result of killing in the past one continues to be violent and takes a liking to killing; as a result of stealing, even though one may be wealthy and prosperous, one likes to steal others' possessions; as a result of sexual misconduct, one is unable to be faithful and frequently changes partners, and so forth.